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BEHIND THE IRONHOWER CURTAIN

Thirty Thrilling Days on the Potomac

By MORRIE RYSKIND

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD. Now that the ordeal is over and I have arrived back safely at my little igloo in Beverly Hills, I can reveal my whereabouts for the past month. I was, incredible as it may seem, in Washington, D. C. I saw and spoke to the natives, ate their simple food, visited some of their government-owned homes and offices, and even made use of their primitive plumbing.

It was not an enterprise I undertook lightly. After all, I was known to the enemy as the man who led the movement to sever all relations with Washington. I had urged that the American states stop sending money to the city on the Potomac, whether in the form of taxes or lend-lease. I had argued vehemently that we should blockade all means of entry to Pentagonville, even if that meant using the American fleet. And, finally, I had called for an ultimatum demanding that the American dollar be restored to its original value of one hundred cents. I should have been stupid indeed not to realize there was a price on my head.

Yet, having weighed all the risks, I determined to go ahead. There were anxious months of preparation; contact had been established with our own underground agents, two of whom turned out to be Pentagon spies — but that is another story. Codes had to be worked out and passports forged; officials had to be bribed — and a train derailed. Those things, simple as they sound, take time.

DEC 18 '53

The last week of waiting was indescribably nerve-wracking. For six days and nights I waited in the cellar for the agreed-upon signal to come to me over the shortwave set. For three whole days I got nothing but local disc jockeys from Tokio, Madrid, Port Said and Kamchatka. (For the record, I heard 3,502 parodies of the "Dragnet" theme during that week.)

But, at 2:52 a.m., Pacific Standard Time, on the morning of October 20, the long-awaited word came. I set my watch at zero and started out. The story my wife gave out the following morning — that I had been sent to Alcatraz for two years for drunken driving — was a smoke screen sent up to cover my train and, if I may say so, a highly successful one. It had about it an air of plausibility and was accepted gleefully by friend and foe alike. The fact that I don't drive and would have had to be drunk to attempt it gave the yarn a verisimilitude that defied detection; the heaven-sent coincidence that a man of

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the same name actually *did* go to Alcatraz at about the same time; and, last but not least, the wish that was father to the thought in so many hearts. The State Department and the other counterespionage agents were completely fooled.

Obviously, I am not at liberty to reveal the route I took from the Hills of Beverly to the Hidden City on the Potomac. Suffice it to say that I used two kayaks, a covered wagon, a jet plane and the subway before I finished my arduous 3,000 mile trek. Nor can I do more than drop a hint about the various disguises I used. Later, when it is safe, I may get Quentin Reynolds to do a book for Bennett Cerf about it. At the moment I must content myself with noting that the two enemy agents I killed in the desert richly deserved their fate; that the dark, swarthy stranger who carried my luggage from the train to the taxicab was introduced to me later as Beria — just Beria: I never did learn his last name; and that the beautful siren who was a constant companion of Senator McCarthy turned out to be his wife. In this hurried account, which is written mainly so that my friends may know I am back home, all I can hope to do is to sum up briefly the sights and sounds and impressions of the mysterious, enigmatic city, as I saw them after an absence of seven years.

LIVING CONDITIONS: The city itself is vastly overcrowded — as it was under Truman. Although some 242 Democrats have been removed from the payroll as the result of a gigantic economy drive, they refuse to leave Washington unless subpoenaed by Harold Velde or Senator Jenner.

The houses are of infinite variety: my guide — obviously a government propagandist — impressed upon me the difference between the magnificent and spacious government-owned White House, where President Eisenhower resides when he happens to be in town, and a series of buildings put up by kulaks. The latter establishments have now been declared unfit for human habitation and will be used by various government agencies for the storage of files, wheat, cotton and other government agencies.

The hotels, where the foreign delegations from America live, are just as crowded, and the rates are high. Indeed, the famous old ship, the Mayflower, has been converted into a hotel and there is some talk of doing the same thing with that part of the fleet that can be spared from the waters of Formosa.

FOOD: In the government-owned cafeterias, Federal employees can eat reasonably and well. It is *their* America.

I had a good meal at the Shoreham for $8.00 — which does not include drinks. On Pennsylvania Avenue I found a dingy little restaurant — obviously not under state control — which had a card in the window reading, "Ham and eggs, french fries, coffee, B and B, $.50". Realizing that it must be a black-market dinery, I glanced around to see if I were being followed, darted in and sat down. When the waitress came, I gave my order surreptitiously. It turned out that I needn't have been so cautious: B and B was not benedictine and brandy, as it would have been any place in America, but bread and

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butter! It is these language barriers, I am convinced, that get in the way of a better understanding.

One thing I couldn't find in all Washington was a decent kosher delicatessen. The one good piece of corned beef I did get was at the house of George Marshall — not the Nobel Prize winner. This George owns the Redskins and has never mistaken Mao-Tse for an agrarian reformer. . . . I doubt that the Nobel Prize winner could tell corned beef from pastrami — and yet a *schlemiel* like that was made Chief of Staff!

SEGREGATION: In spite of newspaper reports and government proceedings, I found segregation to be just as rife as ever. Any informal group that I attended, sometimes openly, sometimes in disguise, was either pro-McCarthy or anti-McCarthy. And at three formal functions — where I appeared in the guise of a waiter — an anti-McCarthyite who found himself sitting next to a pro-McCarthyite would carefully change his seat. No Supreme Court ruling can possibly alter this situation.

NEWS CONFERENCES: The President's news conference is always looked forward to by the reporters, but every decent Republican prays the night before. It is here that the President takes back everything his administration has come out for — until his secretary explains just what the President really meant. There is a strong movement under foot to try to reverse the order of things and have Mr. Hagerty, the press secretary, explain first.

WHAT CHANCE REVOLT? It has been argued that with the overthrow of Truman and the coming to power of Ike, the people of Washington may stage a popular uprising. I do not share that hope. At a secret meeting of the underground I met with some generals and admirals, newspaper correspondents, security officers and even — incredible as it may seem — two men from the State Department. Nobody talked — for fear that the room was wired. The only means of communication was a large slate blackboard on which people wrote their comments and, after the applause, carefully erased them. (I have not, I may say, seen such words since the boys in the sixth grade were chalking them on the school building.) It was cheering and heartening in a way — but I noticed that even the generals were unarmed. Nobody wanted to fight.

A former Democratic office-holder, now living across the border in Virginia, penetrated my disguise one night and was about to shout "Spy!" when he suddenly realized I had penetrated *his* disguise. We approached each other warily and agreed to call truce for the time being. We had a drink at a local tavern, and the old five percenter complained how bad things were with him under the new regime.

He told me he was reduced to selling postcards and asked me to purchase some; they seemed innocuous enough, but held under the light they spelled out "New Deal". I explained that I was not interested in any pornography. He then tried to borrow ten dollars, but settled for half.

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The next day he showed me a letter, unexpurgated, written by H. S. Truman; no sale. Finally, he said, "I know you are a collector of Americana. Would this interest you?" I glanced half-heartedly at the frayed old paper; then, as I saw the signature, I grew excited. I finally purchased it for $300; at least that was the price agreed on. But he would not take Eisenhower, Truman or even Roosevelt dollars. He demanded 300 Coolidge dollars; in other words, I shelled out $650.83.

I cannot reproduce the famous handwriting nor the curious use of *f* for *s*, but I think the letter worth far more than I paid for it. Here it is:

George III,
London, England. Sept. 24, 1780

Your Most Gracious Majesty:

It has been called to my attention that Gen. Benedict Arnold is anxious to enter your employ and I have been asked to give him a character reference.

I have known Gen. Arnold for a good many years and am happy to say that I have always found him capable. He is brilliant, audacious and holds a number of degrees. He has been screened by various loyalty boards and, in spite of some difficulties with the investigating committees of the Continental Congress, has retained the confidence of the *Nation,* the *New Republic,* the *Washington Post,* and the celebrated Squire Commager, Professor of History at Kings College.

I part with the general's services reluctantly, but I do not wish to stand in his way and at the present time I cannot hope to compete with the offer of £25,000 which I understand you have made him.

You have no doubt heard of the fate of poor Major Andre. Thousands of petitions poured in pleading that he be spared, inasmuch as Great Britain was a co-belligerent with us in the various French and Indian wars. Many able lawyers pointed out that the men who seized the late Major took the incriminating papers from him without the formality of a search-warrant — which is in strict violation of the Fifth Amendment to Magna Carta. But, alas! McCarthyism is sweeping the country and Major Andre was a martyr to the witch-hunters. So strong is the feeling that I am afraid, even had Gen. Arnold remained, I, too, would have been forced not to turn my back on him.

But enough of these sad thoughts. How goes it in England? I dread the approaching winter — did *you* ever try to cross the Delaware when it was snowing?

My warmest regards to the Queen. And, I repeat, you can trust Gen. Arnold implicitly unless Moscow makes him a better offer.

With affectionate assurances of esteem, I beg to remain,

Your obedient servant,
G. Washington.

P.S. — Martha regrets that she is unable to fulfill your kind order for two pounds of her candy. Under the present temper of the public, this is regarded as war material and is prohibited by the "trading with the enemy" act. As soon as I get Burgoyne you may expect the candy. — G. W.

Morrie Ryskind is a Hollywood script writer, author of "Of Thee I Sing" and other Broadway plays, contributor to *Plain Talk* and the *Freeman.*

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HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* FRANK CHODOROV, *Associate Editor*

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Speech to UN: However laudable the President's intentions in his address to the United Nations, first spot reactions here are not too optimistic about the chances of the "international agency" plan. Some observers believe that even this tentative scheme of pooling fissionable material for "peaceful purposes" might encounter strong opposition in Congress. First reactions on Capitol Hill showed caution. It is asked why the President did not consult Congress before making such an offer; and, as a matter of fact, why he did not consult the legislative body before attending the Bermuda Conference.

Indeed, foreign observers here privately expressed hopes some weeks ago that the President would consult the legislative leaders and even take some with him to Bermuda. So far as we can discover no such consultations took place, no such invitations were extended to Congressional leaders. If trouble develops, this omission might prove serious.

As for the acceptance of the Russian offer to hold a meeting of the four foreign ministers in Berlin — the scheme hardly inspires enthusiasm in all quarters. Ike previously had called for a show of good faith from the USSR, as a pre-condition to holding such a conference. There has been none. And, it is asked, won't such a meeting result in a feeling of hopelessness among the enslaved peoples of Eastern Europe — peoples who last spring showed signs of throwing off their shackles? Won't they conclude that the U.S. has abandoned them and is recognizing the permanence of the giant slave empire? Hardly good "psychological warfare" tactics. It looks like Messrs. Dulles and Eisenhower suffered a defeat at Bermuda.

Plans for a Purge: What Republicans fear even more than an all-out fight between Ike and Joe is a White House plan to nominate congressional candidates who follow the White House line and to defeat such Republican candidates for renomination who oppose that line. If that plan goes into effect, the convulsions in the GOP will be severe.

Officially there are strong disclaimers of this intent and officially the Citizens for Eisenhower organization, headed by Walter Williams, is only going to back congressional candidates after their primary nominations. But enough has leaked out to confirm fears by incumbent GOP members of Congress that they will — many of them — have to face a surreptitious organization pushing for the nomination of New Deal Republican candidates in next spring's primaries.

The surreptitious organization is said to be headed by Paul Hoffman and has close liaison with the Walter Williams body. Bernard Shanley, White House aide and others (among them C. D. Jackson) in the Executive branch are reported to be active in laying plans. Assistant President Sherman Adams is reported to be "not averse", and a big war chest is available. Studies, it is said, have been made to determine which congressional districts offer the best chance of upsetting "isolationists" and "reactionaries". It is all designed to eliminate the Taft wing of the Party, and to "rebuild" the Republican Party as a "liberal" or "me-too" organization.

Some members of Congress are not worried about defeat at the hands of this body. But they don't like the prospect of raising an extra campaign chest, for a primary in which they usually have no serious opposition. Others, while sure they can be renominated, fear that this Eisenhower "hatchet" organization will cause such disruption in the party that the Democratic candidate may have a chance to win.

No observers believe that the plotters will succeed in nominating or electing a "liberal" slate. But they do fear that the results of this activity may lead to irreparable damage to the Party. It is recalled

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that Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938 staged an official purge of certain conservative Democratic members of the Senate and House. In all cases but one, the President was rebuffed by the voters. But it is also recalled that it was in the election campaign of 1938 that the Republicans made the first real "comeback" since the defeat of 1932; in '38 the GOP won 90 seats and again became a threat to the Democratic regime.

GOP Loses the South: When Attorney General Brownell filed his brief before the Supreme Court, opposing segregation in public schools, he thereby alienated the South — in the view of many political observers here. The honeymoon of the South and the Eisenhower Administration, which gave him electoral votes of 4 Southern states, has come to an end. It is true that the GOP Administration has spurned the FEPC, which Southerners opposed, and pushed states rights in the tidelands legislation. But neither of these measures affected many Southerners. Elimination of segregation, however, would be felt by the mass of the white people in the South. There is little doubt that Brownell's legal step is recognized as a hostile one in the South and, in the eyes of the Southerners, the Eisenhower Administration now appears as no different from the preceding regime of Truman.

With this development, of course, there comes to an end the pious hopes expressed for creation of a "real Republican" party in the South, at least for a long time to come. Such aspirations actually had scant basis for realization. The label "Republican" finds little welcome in Dixie and the votes that won 4 states for Ike came from Democrats who had no intention of deserting the Democratic Party as such.

A vast amount of nonsense has been talked, mainly by New Dealers, about the creation of a "real Republican" party in the South. Finis is written to that for some time to come, as politicos see it in Washington. Recently the Republican Party of Virginia waged an intense campaign for the governorship of that state and was defeated by the Byrd Democratic candidate. We found few conservative Republicans in favor of this GOP effort and some of these voted for the Byrd candidate. The GOP candidate, however, got fulsome support from left-wing Democrats and CIO people. Obviously, this is not the road to follow if you want realignment of parties.

But does the Southern revulsion against the GOP mean that the South will straightway return to the bosom of the Democratic Party? Not necessarily, especially when one takes into consideration the New Deal character of Adlai Stevenson. The present situation, therefore, offers a great opportunity for Northern Republican leaders, who are not New Dealers, to bring about a coalition with their Southern counterparts. Such a coalition would solve many problems.

Not Merely Gossip: The "Mystery of the MIG" has caused much discussion over Capital dinner tables. It may be recalled that in September a North Korean Communist pilot flew his Russian plane into the U.S. lines and got a $100,000 reward from the U.S. for it. The U.S. Air Force wanted to get a MIG to study how it was made and to try to ascertain where the Russians got the parts and material. After we got the MIG, it was taken to Okinawa for study. Then rumors spread that some parts of the plane obviously came from the U.S. The truth or falsity of this charge is what many here would like to clarify. Meanwhile, the MIG has been sent back to Korea and there is a report that our diplomats want to hand it back to the enemy, as a "peace token".

● John McCormack, Democratic leader in the House, is telling his Republican colleagues that the Democratic members are going to "turn isolationist" in the coming session of Congress. There's some banter in this threat, but it's not entirely banter. Not only is there strong sentiment in Northern, usually Democratic, districts against foreign aid and global planning, but Democratic members see a way to embarrass GOP opponents. For the latter would be pressed by the White House to give lip service to Ike's globaloney and world state tendencies.

● Judge Youngdahl of the Appeals Court is said to be considering resignation. The pitch is reported to be this — that the GOP wants Youngdahl to go back to Minnesota (of which he was recently Governor) and to run against Democratic Senator Hubert Humphrey next year for the latter's Senate seat. The GOP believes Youngdahl could win easily. (Humphrey feared this originally; he persuaded Tru-

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man to appoint the Republican Governor Youngdahl to the bench — on the ground that the latter is a "liberal" — in order to get this strong potential opponent out of the way.)

● In the controversy between Senator McCarthy and the White House press department over the number of telegrams received, the Senator made the best showing. While the former claimed that wires supporting Joe were only 2 to 1, friends of McCarthy claimed 6 to 1 in his favor. The Senator did not claim this, preferring the tactic of "leaning over backward". But the inept and possibly mendacious treatment of the matter by the White House press section swayed many to the side of McCarthy.

Labor: A photo-engravers union closed down all of New York's papers by a strike and crippling picket lines. Yet, it could just as well have been the Newspaper Guild, CIO. An illuminating piece of evidence shows how the Commies were able to swing the last Guild election of president. The defeated candidate, Harry Martin, wrote a letter which was published in the *Guild Reporter* on November 13. In it, he referred to the "traditional and very welcome opposition to myself from Communists and fellow-travellers who, in this particular election, cast the deciding votes on explicit orders from the party hierarchy".

He goes on: "This was clearly demonstrated in the unanimous anti-Martin votes cast by such openly Communist units as the *Daily Worker* (NY) and the *Peoples World* (San Francisco). These, with the scattering of a few hundred individual reds still remaining here and there in the Guild jurisdiction, provided at least twice the 214-vote margin against me in the election. I am still proud to have lost with the support of the outstanding Guild leaders in some 70 of the 89 participating locals, rather than to have won with the support of stooges for the enemies of democracy."

The average person may well ask why does the Guild permit Communists and such units as the *Daily Worker* to be members of the union organization at all?

The Real Isolationists: Fifteen national committees of the International Chamber of Commerce recently presented a memorandum in which they depict American imports and tariff restrictions as interfering with world trade.

It is time this canard were laid to rest. True, tariffs and trade restrictions are not to be condoned, by any country; but making Uncle Sam the chief culprit is plainly dishonest, and has for its purpose the extorting of more dollars from the American taxpayer to maintain the decrepit economies of the accusing nations.

The fact is this: if we dropped all our tariffs and trade restrictions, Europe as a whole could not sell us any more goods than she does, simply because most European countries make it impossible for their nationals to buy from us. Trade is a two-way street. You cannot sell unless you are willing to buy. Most European countries have higher tariffs than we have, and, in addition, prevent the entrance of goods by their system of cartels and exchange controls. We were told last week by one of the largest oil producers in this country that before the war twenty-five per cent of his company's lubricating oil business was with Europe; today, the restrictions on American goods have pushed him out of the European market. The president of a steel company reports that because of tariffs and restrictions the price of his product in England is twice the American price; on the other hand, when he meets English steel in other countries, he finds their price lower than ours, which means that the British government taxes its citizens so as to be able to subsidize its exports.

Europe does not want to sell us goods because she does not want to buy goods from us. It is time our governmnet threw the gauntlet down to these Europeans who are constantly accusing us of economic isolationism, and using that charge to give some semblance of justification for their begging for dollars. Why don't they drop their own tariffs? Why don't they free their currency from controls? Why don't they abolish their cartel systems? Why don't they drop their socialism? Not until they do, will their charge against us have any validity.

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